

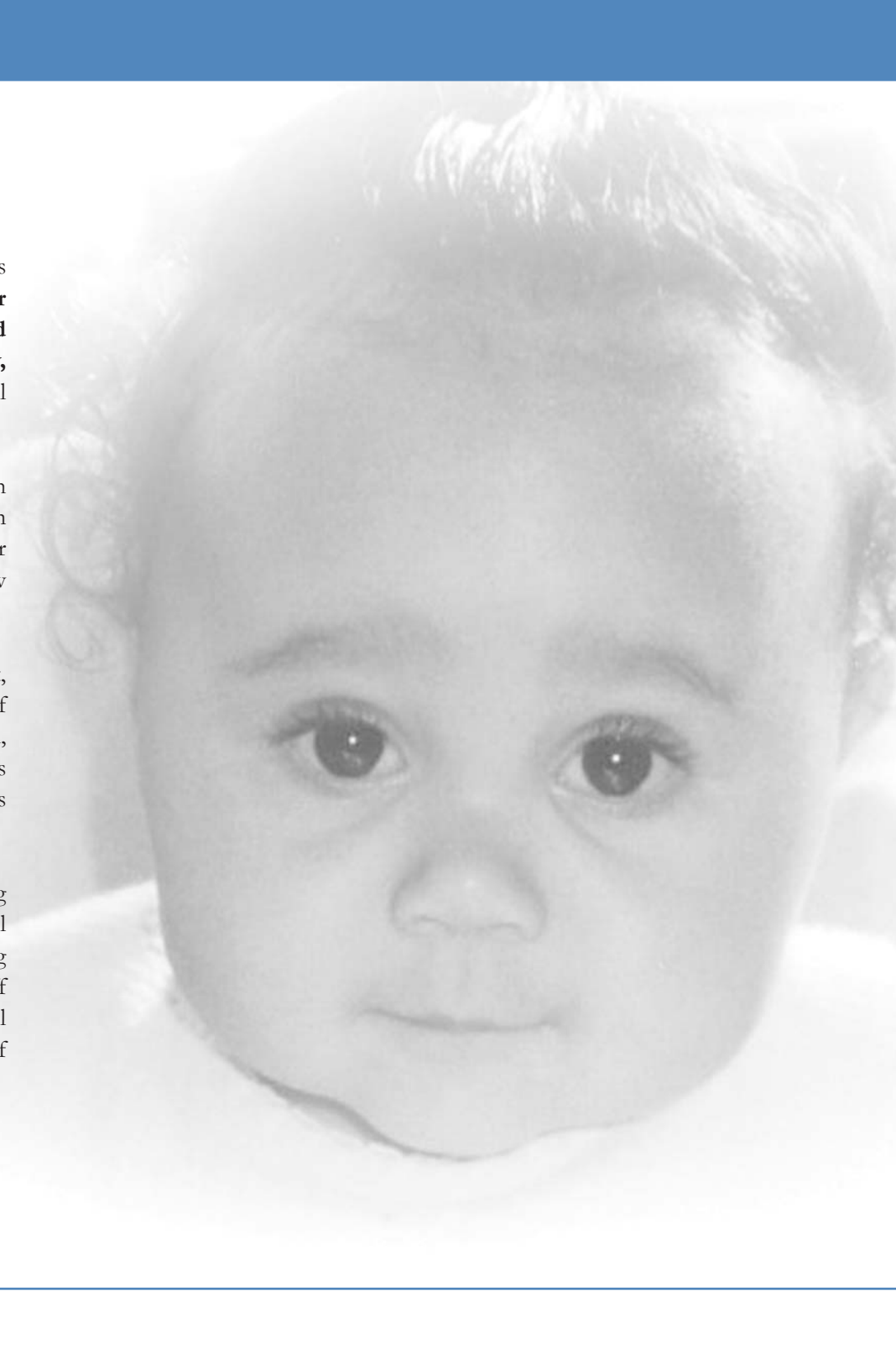
Section 1: Introduction

The following vision statement underlies the approach to developing this report card: **“Regardless of the socio-economic status of his/her family and community every child has the right to childhood experiences which promote the chances of developing into a healthy, well-adjusted and productive adult”** -adopted by Toronto City Council 1999.

This 5th edition of *The Toronto Report Card on Children* measures the health and well-being of children using a variety of social indicators. Changes in the condition of children over time are monitored to ensure that targets for improvement are developed and adequate resources are allocated to allow every child, regardless of their circumstance, to thrive and grow.

This report follows the framework laid out in the original 1999 report, where indicators are developed based on the following determinants of child health and well-being: economic security, health, readiness to learn, Safety and Positive Parenting. The use of a variety of social indicators allows us to monitor the situation of children, and to determine whether this situation is stable, improving or getting worse.

This report represents a coordinated effort from City staff, including Children’s Services, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Social Development and Administration, Social Services, Toronto Shelter Housing and Support, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Library as well as staff from Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Toronto and Jewish Family and Child Services of Toronto.



Working group members provided data as well as interpretive and contextual information relating to the health and well-being of children in their sector, in an effort to illustrate the status of children in the city. Each of these contributors provide a range of services, supports and initiatives aimed at promoting positive outcomes for our city's children, many of which are detailed in the report.

Toronto Children's Services staff took the lead in processing and mapping the final data and coordinating and producing this report.

Purpose

The Toronto Report Card on Children Volume 5 Update 2003 is intended to fulfill several functions:

- to track changes in the condition of children since the 2002 update
- to measure progress in improving the situation of children
- to identify gaps in service
- to help build public awareness and understanding of the needs of children
- to serve as a planning tool for service providers, City officials and elected representatives so they can make decisions about allocating resources
- to act as a stimulus for political and community action to improve the situation of children.



Methodology

Statistics Canada data

Unless otherwise noted, the *Toronto Report Card on Children Volume 5* uses recently released Statistics Canada 2001 Census data to report on characteristics of children and families living in the city. This report uses custom Statistics Canada tables detailing economic and Census family data specifically for City of Toronto families with children 0-14 years. This will differ from data gathered from standard Census 2001 tables that include all economic and Census families with or without children.

The Census 2001 family income data describes family incomes earned in 2000, and is compared against family incomes from the 1996 Census which describes family incomes earned in 1995. In 1996 low-income cut-off (LICO) data was extracted for children 0-12 years. In 2001 the low-income data was expanded to include children 0-14 years.

It is important to note that while the Statistics Canada Census is our main source for data regarding family incomes, there are limitations. Coverage errors (in particular, when dwellings or individuals are missed or incorrectly enumerated) can result in under-coverage in some areas. Non-response errors result when responses cannot be obtained from a sufficient number of households or individuals or their questionnaires are incomplete. This may result in the suppression of particular statistics for a defined geography. This suppression is the result of confidentiality rules that prohibit the release of any data that may be used to identify any individual response. This was the case for income data from a key census tract in the Regent Park area of Toronto, which has traditionally been a census tract with very high proportions of low-income children. The response rates for this census tract were very low, causing the family income data to be suppressed and potentially underestimating the percentage of low-income children. In addition, when analyzing specific groups (e.g., lone-parent families) at too detailed a level, the data may also become suppressed.

Indicator data

The indicator data provided from the contributing partners throughout the Determinants section may vary in terms of the ages of children and the time period that is being reported. All sectors collect and maintain data for different age groups and in different ways. The data provided was always the most current and complete that was available at the time of the production of this report.



Ward boundary changes

Amendments were made to city ward boundaries in late 2003. A portion of Ward 28 Toronto Centre-Rosedale, south of Bloor Street and bounded by Rosedale Valley Road on the west and the eastern ward boundary (Don River) on the east, moved into Ward 27 Toronto Centre Rosedale. This change will affect the comparability of some ward-based data. All 2001 Census data reported has been calculated based on the new ward boundaries.

Maps

Throughout the document, reference is made to specific maps. Maps can be found starting on page 65. These maps will give a clearer picture of how issues relating to children vary across the city. Map 20, electoral boundaries, is a handy reference outlining the federal, provincial and municipal electoral boundaries for the City of Toronto.

Included in the back pocket of this report are three mylar overlays that can be used in conjunction with any of the maps to give an added dimension.

